

**Submission
No 66**

**INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF CAT POPULATIONS
IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Mr Barry Watson

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Over the past few years I have approached Local, State and Federal Governments in regard to the control of domestic cats.

During this time it has been made clear that Councils cannot move to implement local controls due to the Companion Animals Act 1998.

This Act (Companion Animals Act 1998) has as its main focus upon dogs and their control. With only Part 4 of this act dealing with the control of cats.

In my local area (Winmalee in the Blue Mountains Council area) I have had words with a neighbor requesting that she keeps her cat in overnight. I was told that I could attend to the issue as I saw fit. We have seen a Ringtail possum decapitated, baby blue tongue lizards and adult blue tongues killed, all within our property and during the evening hours.

Answers I have received from those politicians I have approached have been quite dismissive when a response has been made. Among these responses was the cost to owners of cats during these difficult times.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service makes mention of dogs being prohibited within a National Park. Cats are not mentioned at all, however pets does get a mention but not with the specifics given to dogs.

An average visitor to a National Park would not see a sign at the Park entry prohibiting cats from entry but would see a sign prohibiting dogs. Why do we not visually exclude cats?

Until such times as the NSW Companion Animals Act is amended or updated then Councils will perceive this as restricting their ability to implement local orders on cat control.

We must ensure that changes to the Act are made to clearly define the responsibility of owners to the containment of cats. This must include cats being prohibited from being able to roam beyond their owners fence line unless on a lead or harness.

Whilst looking at the information available on line on the issue of feral cats Australia wide I have found that some States/Councils have implanted control orders on cats.

The Adelaide Hills Council has successfully adopted a by-law that will require domestic cats to be kept at home at all times from January 1, 2022, unless they are on a harness or a leash.

Kangaroo Island has the strictest laws relating to domestic cat ownership in Australia.

Since 2007 the KI Council has had in place strict bylaws governing the ownership of domestic cats. Cats on Kangaroo Island must be:

- Registered
- Micro-chipped
- De-sexed*

- Contained to your premises (House) unless in a contained run
- Restricted to no more than two cats per premises*

Queensland Council areas which have regulations requiring cats to be kept within the home property boundary, if not under control of a harness or lead outside of the boundary are.

Rockhampton
Ipswich
City of Gold Coast
Moreton Bay
Sunshine Coast
Toowoomba
Mackay
Whitsunday

NSW is certainly a laggard with the issue of effective cat control and it is past time for a recognition of the issue of native animal predation. It also past time to acknowledge that cats in themselves have never really been the issue, it is of course ownership that is at the crux of the matter. A majority of cat owners in themselves will never acknowledge that their feline companions are a threat to our environment. One of my neighbors is adamant that her cat although free to wander during the day is no threat to nature. Yet I often see the animal wandering down towards the National Park area. Without domestic cats having the freedom of movement over the years we would not have the staggering numbers of feral cats that we have today.

I respectfully ask you the committee to move with some urgency to address this glaring issue within firstly the Companions Animal Act 1998 and signage for National Parks to also identify the prohibition of cats.

Yours faithfully
Barry Watson.